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Subject: Senator to receive honor from asbestos awareness group - Western News 1-25-11

Senator to receive honor from asbestos awareness group

The Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization last week announced that U.S. Sen. Max Baucus of Montana will be presented with the Tribute of Hope Award for his efforts fighting on behalf of residents of Libby, Lincoln County and asbestos victims everywhere.

"It's an honor to receive this award. I'm humbled and grateful to the people of Libby for their courage and resilience in the face of this outrageous tragedy, and this award truly belongs to them," Baucus said through a news release. "I'm also grateful to organizations like the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization and folks in Montana and all over the country who've worked so hard to raise awareness and fight for the victims of asbestos exposure," Baucus said.

Baucus's efforts helped lead to a public health emergency designation in Libby.

"There's nothing we can ever do to fully right the unimaginable wrong that took place in Libby," Baucus said. "But I'm committed to the fight to make sure Libby gets the tools it needs to clean up this disaster and care for everyone who has suffered as a result."

Since news reports first linked widespread deaths and illness to exposure to deadly asbestos fibers at the defunct W.R. Grace and Co. mine, Baucus has visited Libby more than 20 times, secured millions for health care and cleanup, brought numerous White House cabinet secretaries to the town, helped save the Center for Asbestos Related Disease clinic, and has dogged the Environmental Protection Agency to keep cleanup efforts moving forward.

As the key author of health-care reform law, Baucus fought to make sure the law included a mechanism for

residents of Libby and Lincoln County to access the health care they were entitled to as victims of a public health emergency. As a result, victims of asbestos exposure in Lincoln County began getting care under Medicare in the spring of 2010.

Baucus will be presented the award at ADAO's seventh annual International Asbestos Awareness Conference, which will be held in Atlanta on April 1-3.

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